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2-2838

CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES \$2.46 MILLION IN FIRST NATIONS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENTS IN NORTHERN ONTARIO

DRYDEN, ONTARIO (January, 18, 2007) – Mr. Rod Bruinooge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, is pleased to announce approximately \$2.46 million in investments towards economic activities that will advance development opportunities for First Nations peoples in Northern Ontario.

Speaking in Dryden, Mr. Bruinooge said, "We are working with native leaders and communities to improve opportunities and provide real results for Aboriginal people. Maximizing First Nations participation in economic opportunities is important to ensure a prosperous economic future for all Canadians. Robust economic opportunities are essential to the development of sustainable, healthy communities, and Canada's New Government is pleased to be doing its part to make this happen."

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has committed to support the following projects in 2006-2007:

- \$745,000 to the Attawapiskat/Fort Albany/Fort Severn First Nations to develop opportunities linked to diamond mining in Northern Ontario;
- \$560,000 to the Pikangikum First Nation for the Whitefeather Forestry Project (Sustainable Forestry License);
- \$317,500 to the Eabametoong First Nation for community-based resource planning at Eabametoong and Mishkeegogamang;
- \$200,000 to the Seven Generations Education Institute for a Community Economic Development Officer Training Course;
- \$141,900 to the Big Grassy & Ojibways of Onigaming First Nations for activities related to the Assabaska Ojibway Heritage Park;
- \$100,000 to the Pic Mobert First Nation for a Forestry Situational Assessment;
- \$100,000 to the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation for the Two Feather Forest Products Business Development initiative;
- \$64,700 to the Ojibways of Onigaming for a Water Bottling Manufacturing Feasibility Study;
- \$48,000 to the Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek (formerly known as Sand Point) to explore forestry initiatives;
- \$48,000 to the Ochiichagwe'Bagigo'Ining Ojibway Nation to explore

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economic ventures;

- \$40,000 to the Mattagami First Nation for mining strategy initiatives;
- \$40,000 to the Pic Mobert First Nation for a Mining Sector Opportunities Assessment;
- \$31,900 to the Batchewana First Nation for a Fisheries Management Plan; and,
- \$25,000 to the Nishnawbe-Aski Development Fund for a Hydro Project Development Workshop.

More information on each project can be found in the Backgrounder.

In 2005-2006, INAC Ontario Region invested approximately \$15 million in economic development funding to assist First Nations to improve their socio-economic conditions to help close the gaps between First Nations peoples and other Canadians.

For more information, please contact:

Linda Britt, Communications Officer
INAC Communications
(807) 624-1559

Chief Andrew Solomon
Fort Albany First Nation
(705) 278-1044

Chief Roy Gray
Fort Severn First Nation
(807) 478-2572

Chief Bobby Kelly
Ojibways of Onigaming
(807) 484-2162

Chief Esther Pitchenese
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation
(807) 938-6684

Chief Charlie O'Keese
Eabametoong First Nation
(807) 242-7221

Chief Connie Gray-McKay
Mishkeegogamang First Nation
(807) 928-2414

Mr. Mike Fox, Sector Specialist
Nishnabe-Aski Nation Development
Fund
(807) 623-5397

Mr. Delbert Horton
Seven Generations Education Institute
(807) 274-2796

Chief Charles Pascal
Pikangikum First Nation
(807) 773-5578

Chief Jeffrey Florent Desmoulin
Pic Mobert First Nation
(807) 822-2134

Chief Vernon Barry Henry
Ochiichagwe'babigo'ining First
Nation
(807) 548-5876

Chief Dean Sayers
Batchewana First Nation
(705) 759-0914

Chief Albert Comegan
Big Grassy First Nation
(807) 488-5614

Chief Willis McKay
Mattagami First Nation
(705) 894-2072

Kristen Sills
University of Windsor
(519) 256-3113 ext. 25

Ms. Audrey Gilbeau
Economic Development Officer
Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek
(807) 623-2724

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Attawapiskat/Fort Albany/Fort Severn First Nations - Mining Initiatives
INAC committed \$745,000 to help with negotiations, business planning and other key activities that support First Nations employment and other opportunities linked to diamond mining around Attawapiskat First Nation.

The Attawapiskat First Nation is located on the west coast of James Bay, approximately 455 kilometres by air north of Timmins, Ontario. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 2,854, with an on-reserve population of approximately 1,534.

The Fort Albany First Nation is located on the west coast of James Bay, approximately 445 kilometres (by air) north of Timmins, Ontario and approximately 650 kilometres (by air) north-northeast of Thunder Bay, Ontario. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 621, with an on-reserve population of approximately 492.

The Fort Severn First Nation is located on the southwest coast of Hudson Bay, approximately 830 kilometres (by air) north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 621, with an on-reserve population of approximately 492.

Pikangikum First Nation - Whitefeather Forestry Project - Sustainable Forestry License

INAC committed \$560,000 to help the Pikangikum First Nation obtain a sustainable forestry license on its traditional land. The project includes community support and participation, and Province of Ontario endorsement and support. It will provide significant forestry resource sector potential and opportunity, as well as private sector potential to underwrite further development costs in the future.

The Pikangikum First Nation is located approximately 90 kilometres north of Red Lake, Ontario, approximately 80 kilometres east of the Ontario-Manitoba border. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 2,125 with an on-reserve population of approximately 2042.

Eabametoong First Nation - Community-based Resource Planning

The Eabametoong and Mishkeegogamang First Nations received \$317,500 for community-based resource use planning in their respective traditional use areas, to obtain a sustainable forest licence as well as designing and implementing a community capacity building plan. The Eabametoong First Nation and Mishkeegogamang First Nation are working in partnership toward the management and development of natural resource opportunities in the traditional use areas of the two First Nations.

The Eabametoong First Nation (sometimes referred to as Fort Hope) is located approximately 320 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. It is accessible by air year-round, and winter road during the coldest months of the winter. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 2,173, with an on-reserve population of approximately 1,225.

The Mishkeegogaming First Nation (formerly known as Osnaburgh) is located approximately 320 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. It is accessible year round via all weather road (highway 527). The First Nation has a membership of approximately 1,519, with an on-reserve population of approximately 978.

Seven Generations - Community Economic Development Officer Training Course

INAC provided \$200,000, through the Community Support Services Program, for an intensive nine week training course for Community Economic Development Officers (CEDOs) in Ontario. This course began in the fall of 2006, and will be delivered over 10 months. It will provide twelve CEDOs the opportunity to enhance both their business and analytical skills to improve economic development services for their First Nations. This project is a partnership between Seven Generations Education Institute, the University of Windsor and the Zarex Business Centre in London. Each participating community contributed \$5,000 for their CEDO to attend the program.

Seven Generations Education Institute is designed to provide for the education and training needs of Aboriginal people. Formerly known as the Rainy Lake Ojibway Authority, the institution provides educational instruction at the secondary, post-secondary and vocational levels.

Big Grassy & Ojibways of Onigaming First Nations - Assabaska Ojibway Heritage Park

INAC committed \$141,900 to the First Nations to support activities related to the sustainable operation of the Assabaska Ojibway Heritage Park. The park is jointly owned by the Ojibways of Onigaming and the Big Grassy First Nations. In 1997, the First Nations were successful in settling the long-standing Assabaska Land Claim.

The Big Grassy First Nation is located on a variety of settlements approximately between 40 and 80 kilometres south of Kenora, Ontario. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 638, with an on-reserve population of approximately 223.

The Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation is located on five settlements approximately 280 kilometres southeast of Kenora, Ontario. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 682, with an on-reserve population of approximately 436.

Pic Mobert First Nation - Forestry Situational Assessment

INAC provided \$100,000 to the Pic Mobert First Nation for a forestry situational assessment. The project is intended to assist the community develop their own approach to forestry development issues and opportunities. It is designed to provide a more sustainable use of lands and resources on and off reserve, with the aim of improving the economic, social and environmental quality of life for the residents of the community.

Pic Mobert First Nation is located approximately halfway between Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario on the Highway 17 corridor. The Pic Mobert First Nation has a membership of approximately 791 members, with an on-reserve population of approximately 316.

Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation - Two Feather Forest Products Business Development

INAC provided \$100,000 to the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation for the Two Feather Forest Products Business Development initiative. INAC is assisting

the First Nation to complete an environmental assessment and the studies required for the business planning for the project. The First Nation has been seeking a laminated post and beam business with a private sector partner in Finland and have completed the first three phases of this project.

The Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation is located approximately 30 kilometres east of Dryden, Ontario. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 523, with an on-reserve population of approximately 171.

Ojibways of Onigaming - Water Bottling Manufacturing Feasibility Study

INAC committed \$64,700 to the Ojibways of Onigaming for a project including a feasibility study, a business plan and a water quality and hydrology analysis. This project could lead to employment opportunities and business potential for the community.

Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek - Forestry Fibre Use Strategy

INAC provided \$48,000 to Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek to explore forestry initiatives. The fibre use strategy supports negotiations, and identifies the forestry and business technical skills required to allocate under-utilized wood volumes to the First Nation. The First Nation intends to harvest the under-utilized fibre which will create jobs and provide training to community members.

The Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek is a First Nation with a membership of approximately 162, most of whom live throughout northwestern Ontario.

Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining Ojibway Nation for economic ventures

INAC provided \$48,000 to the First Nation for its Common Land Common Ground project. The objective of the project is to enable the First Nation to share in the development and identification of opportunities of feasible ventures for Tunnel Island and Old Fort Island in partnership with the City of Kenora.

The Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation is located approximately 14 kilometres northwest of Kenora, Ontario. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 329, with an on-reserve population of approximately 140.

Mattagami First Nation - Mining Strategy

INAC committed \$40,000 to the Mattagami First Nation to support the development of a comprehensive mining strategy. This project is identified as an economic priority within the community's economic development plan with a potential for partnerships with other First Nations and industry players.

The Mattagami First Nation is located approximately 70 kilometres south of Timmins, Ontario. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 450, with an on-reserve population of approximately 186.

Pic Mobert First Nation- Mining Sector Opportunities Assessment

In a second project at Pic Mobert, INAC has committed \$40,000 to the First Nation for opportunities related to mining sector developments in its traditional territory. The ultimate goal for the First Nation is to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with mining companies to determine what economic benefits can be negotiated through Participation Agreements or Impact Benefit Agreements.

Batchewana First Nation - Fisheries Management Plan

INAC committed \$31,900 to the Batchewana First Nation to conduct fisheries assessments. The data will be used to prepare a five year fisheries management plan. To date, the First Nation has developed a fisheries sampling work plan and protocol to be followed by fisheries technicians in collecting the primary data.

The Batchewana First Nation is located on several settlements adjacent to and near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The First Nation has a membership of approximately 2,268, with an on-reserve population of approximately 631.

Nishnawbe-Aski Development Fund (NADF)- Hydro Project Development Workshop

INAC provided \$25,000 to NADF to fund a Hydro Project Primer Workshop. The need for capacity building with First Nations in the area of hydro project development was identified. As a result, a task-force was developed with First Nation, government and industry representatives to develop tools to assist First Nations in this area. NADF facilitated the sharing of this information with First Nations. The benefits from this project increases capacity for First Nations to be better positioned to participate in the energy industry specifically related to waterpower development. The workshop was conducted in December 2006.

Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund (NADF) is an Aboriginal owned and controlled organization delivering business and financial services to the member First Nations of Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

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